

Kirtland plans Earth Day celebration

BY STEVE MILLIGAN
377th ABW Public Affairs

For more than 33 years, Americans have been celebrating Earth Day. The first Earth Day took place on April 22, 1970. Many of the participants feared that if something wasn't done to change the way we live our lives and do business, the earth wouldn't last another 20 years.

Kirtland AFB will celebrate International Earth Day March 17, at the Youth Center 2-4 p.m. Col. Hank Andrews, Jr., 377th Air Base Wing commander will give opening remarks. Earth Day Chairman, Carl Lanz, said Earth Day activities include a tree-planting, interactive games, hands-on projects, recycling education, various exhibits including Women's Heritage, and free items for the children. There will also be live birds of prey on display. Base parents can teach their children the importance of recycling every day by taking household recyclables to the Recycling Center in the parking lot of the Commissary.

The idea came from a former senator from Wisconsin, Gaylord Nelson. He started a grass-roots campaign to bring attention to the environment. Nelson enlisted the aid of Denis Hayes who became the national coordinator of the first event that would later be known as Earth Day. While Nelson generated support on both sides of the aisle in Congress, Hayes began contacting colleges across the nation to spread the word. The response was more successful than either man could have imagined. From that early success arose a new consciousness for the environment and led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and passage of legislation such as the Clean Air and Water Acts. Scores celebrate Earth Day in cities and towns around the country and, thanks to the Internet, the world celebrates an International Earth Day.

Col. Patricia K. Hunt, 377th Maintenance Group commander, left, Col. Linda F. Jones, 377th Mission Support Group commander, center, and Col. Stuart R. Cowles, 377th Medical Group commander, right, contribute to the 2004 Air Force Assistance Fund campaign, during the March 10 kickoff event at the Chapel Annex. The fund raised \$4,200 toward Kirtland AFB's \$62,551.49 goal. Unit representatives for the campaign will begin contacting all TEAM KIRTLAND members.



Photo by Todd Berenger

AF Assistance Fund campaign in full swing

BY CAPT. RICH OTTON
377th Contracting Squadron

The Air Force Assistance Fund for 2004 kicked off in full swing as of Monday. The campaign runs March 8–April 16. On March 10, the assistance fund campaign started its drive in earnest with a kick-off celebration in the Chapel annex.

Breakfast snacks, coffee and hot chocolate were served to the many participants at the kick-off ceremony. Many of the leadership were there to provide their support to this worthwhile program, both in their attendance and in their donations. This celebration alone earned \$4,200 in donations to the four charities that make up the AFAF. Kirtland AFB's goal for this year is \$62,551.49.

Last week's AFAF article discussed the overall program and gave some highlights of what the individual assistance fund charities do with the donations they receive. This week, I would like to use this space to discuss where our goal comes from and what the money is actually used for.

The goal for Kirtland AFB is based on our active-duty end-strength. The Air Force Assistance Fund program office comes up with an estimated donation based on rank.

This table summarizes those estimates.

Colonel	\$89	Chief master sergeant	\$54
Lieutenant colonel	\$74	Senior master sergeant	\$44
Major	\$62	Master sergeant	\$38
Captain	\$49	Technical sergeant	\$32
1st lieutenant	\$41	Staff sergeant	\$24
2nd lieutenant	\$33	Senior airman	\$20
		Airman first class	\$16
		Airman/airman basic	\$14

This information, multiplied by our strength at each rank, gives Kirtland AFB the potential to raise over \$125,000. The Assistance Fund assumes that each base will only receive half of their potential and sets the goal at that number, which for Kirtland AFB is \$62,551.49. Keeping in mind that payroll deductions are one option to donate, not a single active-duty member would have to donate more than \$9 a month and we would double our goal! Also, civilians are welcome to provide donations, which gives Kirtland AFB the potential to raise way above our goal. So where do these donations go? Here are some facts of how one of the charities, the Air Force Aid Society, actually assisted members of the Air Force at Kirtland AFB.

★	Bundles for Babies	\$2,659
★	Child Care for PCS	\$1,580
★	"Give Parents a Break"	\$3,876
★	Phone Cards for deployed members	\$5,800
★	Educational Grants	\$13,500
★	Emergency Grant Assistance	\$7,124

That's over \$34,000 back to Kirtland AFB from one charity, and these are only the large dollar programs they provided assistance to. There are many other causes that the Air Force Aid Society donated to on Kirtland AFB, and the Air Force in general. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact your unit representatives Capt. Rich Otton, 846-4673, or Master Sgt. Dianne Lue, 846-9513, the Kirtland AFB Air Force Assistance Fund representatives.

377th Air Base Wing court reporter retires

Gloria K. Needham retires from the Civil Service April 2, with a ceremony March 15, 2 p.m., in the 377th Air Base Wing Presentation Center. Mrs. Needham's civil service career began at Barksdale AFB, La., in 1959. In 1962, she received her first job as an Air Force court reporter at Forbes AFB, Kan. She was attending night school to learn the stenograph court reporting system when her former husband received orders to Elmendorf AFB, Alaska. Shortly after arriving at Elmendorf AFB, Ms. Needham had her first child, Jim. After having her son, she decided to become a stay-at-home mom. She later had her daughters, Kimberly and Ginger. Mrs. Needham had a 13-year break in civil service while she raised her three children and she stayed active in direct sales, baking and providing daycare. In 1977, Mrs. Needham resumed her civil service career at Kirtland AFB. She began as the secretary to the vehicle maintenance officer. Within six months, she began working for the Air Force Contract Management Division as a secretary. She concluded her tenure there as the secretary to the chief of staff. In 1985, still at Kirtland AFB, Mrs. Needham was once again an Air Force court reporter. Over the years, she has reported courts martial, boards of inquiry, medical credentials boards, safety investigation boards, accident investigation boards, flight evaluation boards and discharge boards. She has also reported and transcribed depositions for the 377th Air Base Wing Inspector General and Family Advocacy Program. For almost 16 years, Mrs. Needham has been married to Stanton Needham, who is retired from New Mexico State University. In addition to her three children, she has four grandchildren, Megan, Adam, Noah and Aaron.



Gloria K. Needham

2 TEAM KIRTLAND Airmen die



Chief Master Sgt. William J. “Joe” Compton

Chief Master Sgt. William J. “Joe” Compton, loving husband, father, brother and friend, passed away unexpectedly in Albuquerque on Feb. 17. He was born in Albuquerque on Feb. 14, 1948, and was a life-long resident of New Mexico.

Chief Compton enlisted in the New Mexico Air National Guard in 1966, then became a full-time Guardsman in 1972. He served in Vietnam with the New Mexico Air National Guard 150th Fighter Group.

At the time of his death, he was a member of the 150th Fighter Wing, as the Component Repair Branch chief.

Chief Compton is a decorated senior noncommissioned officer, having earned numerous honors including, the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Achievement Medal and Presidential Unit Citation and Vietnam Service Medal

with four Bronze Stars. He was an active member of the Enlisted Association of the United States, and served on the executive board for many years.

Chief Compton was also active in the Chief’s Council, which promotes the esprit de corps for the members of the Guard, their families and the community.

He received a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from the University of Albuquerque in 1975.

The hobby that took most of his time was helping others. His mother and father, Collette Clara and William Robert Compton, preceded him in death.

He is survived by his wife of 32 years, Susan, daughters Sheri Lorraine and Lt. Christine Marie Compton and a brother John Robert.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Jude Children’s Hospital, P.O. Box 50, Memphis, Tenn. 38101-9929.



Staff Sergeant Dayne S. Riddle

Staff Sergeant Dayne S. Riddle was killed Feb. 24 in a motorcycle accident.

He was the assistant noncommissioned officer in charge of sortie support, 551st Aircraft Maintenance Unit, 58th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Kirtland AFB.

He was born on March 2, in Wrightsville, Penn., and graduated from Eastern High School in 1992.

He entered the Air Force in 1995.

His assignments include Charleston AFB, S.C., and Rhein-Main AB, Germany, prior to his assignment at Kirtland AFB.

He attended the College of Santa Fe where he was taking classes toward a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice.

His interests included hunting, snowmobiling and dirt bike riding.

He is survived by his mother and two daughters.

Bagram AB’s Camp Cunningham honors Air Force hero

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan (AFPN)—A true American hero was remembered March 4 during a ceremony that officially dedicated the Air Force compound here to the memory of Air Force Cross recipient Senior Airman Jason D. Cunningham.

Airman Cunningham gave his life supporting Operation Enduring Freedom while saving the lives of 10 others March 4, 2002.

The service, attended by more than 200 Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and civilians, forever changed the name of “Air Force Village” to Camp Cunningham.

Airman Cunningham was a pararescueman assigned to the 38th Rescue Squadron, Moody AFB, Ga., when he was killed in action. He had come under intense small-arms fire and a barrage of rocket-propelled grenades in the mountains of Paktia Province, Afghanistan, during a rescue mission there.

A ceremony posthumously awarding the Air Force Cross to Airman Cunningham, a Carlsbad, N.M. native, was held at Kirtland AFB in Sept. 2002. Airman Cunningham had trained at the Air Force Pararescue School at Kirtland AFB.

According to his official Air Force biography, Airman Cunningham was the primary Air Force combat search-and-rescue medic assigned to a quick-reaction force on that fateful day. His team went into hostile enemy territory to save two American servicemen evading enemy capture.

Col. James A. Whitmore, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing commander, spoke of the Airman’s uncommon valor and of his own pride in wearing the same Air Force uniform that Airman



Photo by Master Sgt. Jeff Szczechowski
Master Sgt. Taylor Crenshaw and Marine Sgt. Maj. Jerome Alford take a moment to reflect on the life of Senior Airman Jason. D. Cunningham at a monument dedicated to him at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. Sergeant Crenshaw is the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group first sergeant.

Cunningham donned with such distinction.

“The heroic efforts and selfless sacrifice that he exhibited on the battlefield will continue to inspire all of us who serve in Operation Enduring Freedom,” he said during the ceremony.

Col. Gary Woltering, 455th Expeditionary Operations Group commander, said that Airman Cunningham’s ultimate sacrifice will never be forgotten by the men and women fighting the war on terrorism.

“Senior Airman Cunningham is a hero who will always be remembered for his courage and dedication to duty,” said the colonel. “He remains a comrade-in-arms to all of us who serve at Bagram, and his warrior spirit will live on in the Air Force men and women who have followed him in Operation Enduring Freedom.”

From this day forward, a wooden sign with the words “Camp Cunningham,” built by Staff Sgt. Jonathan Proffit of the 455th Security Forces Squadron, will stand sentry at the entrance to the Air Force compound.

And just outside the group headquarters building, stands a marble monument, made by Capt. Matt Duston, Master Sgt. James Wilson and Airman 1st Class Justin Cyr, all 455th Expeditionary Operations Group civil engineers.

The monument was unveiled during the dedication and provides a permanent tribute to one of America’s “best and brightest,” officials said.

The words etched into the stone read: “In honor of Senior Airman Jason Dean Cunningham, who gave his life saving others, in the service of his country.”